DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 188 320 EA 012 771

AUTHOR Pierce, Lawrence C.
TITLE School Based Management. OSSC Bulletin Vol. 23, No. 10.
INSTITUTION Oregon School Study Council, Eugene.
PUB DATE Jun 80
NOTE 56p.
AVAILABLE FROM Oregon School Study Council, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403 ($2.00; $1.50 if prepaid; discount of 10% for 10 or more copies)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Organization; Administrator Role; Community Role; *Decentralization; Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; Parent Role; State School District Relationship; Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

School-based management is an educational reform intended to reverse the trend toward increasing centralization of school administration. Though it has been claimed that centralization increases financial and educational equity, aids efficiency, and eases administration, examination of these claims reveals them to be based too often on incomplete, inappropriate, or idealistic assumptions. Proponents of school-based management argue that many decisions affecting personnel, curriculum, and the use of resources should be decided at the school level by the people who are most aware of the local needs. Implementation of school-based management requires redefinition of the roles of central office personnel, principals, teachers, parents, and other members of the community. Provision of choice in education is an important element in any plan. Considerations at the state level include the relevance of state requirements, the existence and condition of management information systems, the effects of funding, the revision of performance standards, and the encouragement of change. (Author/PGD)

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OSSC BULLETIN

School Based Management

by

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PREFACE

Contending forces alternately advocate greater centralization or greater decentralization in the management of public education. In this *Bulletin* Dr. Pierce discusses the school based management concept as a type of educational reform for the improvement of public education through greater decentralization. He also outlines changes that would be needed were a school district to implement a successful school based management program.

Under such a plan local schools normally exercise more control over personnel and curricular decisions. Parent advisory councils are given clearly defined responsibilities in relation to local school advice and/or decision making.

At the state level incentives can be provided for school districts that wish to experiment with decentralized management programs. This could involve a decrease in statewide regulations or include greater equalization of state-aid formulas. This *Bulletin* refers to a number of steps local school districts might take to move toward school based management programs without any legislative changes.

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Kenneth A. Erickson
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I.

Introduction

School based management is an educational reform designed to improve public education through decentralization. Its adoption involves moving many decisions regarding school budgets, personnel, and curriculum from the central district office to the school building. Under this system, the school replaces the central district office as the basic unit of educational management. State education departments, district school boards, district superintendents, and central district staff[1] share their decision-making powers with principals, teachers, parents and students.

School based management is born out of frustration with the failure of our current, centrally-organized system of public schools to control school costs, to reverse the decline in student test scores, to reduce school violence, to respond to community differences, and to effectively manage schools. Many people place blame for these problems on the organization of schools themselves. Too frequently, they observe, decisions about what goes on in the classroom are made by people remote from those most essential in the educational process, teachers and students. School based management attempts to reverse the trend toward increasing centralization of school administration by returning to the school level many decisions affecting personnel, curriculum, and the use of resources. By doing so, it is believed that more decisions will be made by people who know the real problems of education and who must live with the full consequences of their decisions.[2]

Support for school based management has grown in proportion to the failure of other reforms to improve the quality of public education. The high cost of operating public schools and the increasing dissatisfaction

with their performance have made schools the focus of many proposed changes. Commissions, critics, councils, consultants, and Congress all offer advice. The range of proposals extends from space-age technology to stone-age discipline. Reforms and reformers come and go, but schools show few signs of substantive change. Frequently, schools pass through changes only to resume their earlier form. Just as frequently, they are able to resist reform efforts altogether. Past reforms have failed adequately to consider the organizational complexity of our current school system and the enormous commitment of school people and many other citizens to the status quo.[3]

It is possible that school based management also may be put to rest in the overcrowded cemetery for education reforms. There are reasons to expect a livelier future, however. First, the community school and local control have strong roots in the history of American public education. School based management appeals to those who fondly remember the local school that provided basic education molded to the particular requirements of children in the school community.

Second, school based management is not new but consists of a number of activities that have a long history of successful practice in American public education. Many principals and school staffs have long had responsibilities for hiring faculty members, developing curriculum, and making some budgeting decisions. Most schools have parent groups involved in school activities. School based management allows many familiar school activities to be carried on at the school site rather than at the district office.

Third, school based management already is being implemented in some school districts and a few states around the country. Florida and California

have state level programs to encourage decentralization of decision making to the school level.[4] Individual school districts, such as the Salt Lake City School District have adopted a school based management approach, calling it shared governance. Individual schools, such as the Willagillespie Elementary School in Eugene, Oregon have adopted school based management.

The City of New York initially turned to decentralization as a means of increasing the amount of financial aid from the state for public schools. The decentralization of the public schools created multiple school districts instead of one and in this way made public education in the city eligible for increased allotments from the state.

The emphasis of the New York experience is to realize decentralization through greater decision making at the community/school level. However, the New York community decision-making process is inhibited by the lack of legal authority for decentralization and the tight fiscal control exercised by both the legislature and political leaders over the schools and school districts.

In Tacoma, Washington, decentralized budgeting has been utilized as a means of providing greater community control and decision making. Tacoma was faced with a need for an additional 22 million dollars to support schools. Their method of building the budget "from the bottom up" and from the community and individual school to the central administration was credited as a factor in passing a necessary tax levy.

The fourth reason to believe that school based management has a better than average chance of survival is that several influential organizations and institutions are supporting research in it. The National Urban Coalition and the National Institute of Education commissioned a study of the school

site lump sum budgeting in Florida and California. A conference was held in Washington in March of 1978 to discuss the implications of that study and future directions for work on school based management.[5] The Florida legislature with support from the Ford Foundation and the National Conference of State Legislatures examined school based management in Florida as a part of a larger evaluation of Florida's education reforms.[6] Educational scholars, as well are interested in the reform. Several dissertations have or are about to be completed dealing with this topic.[7] As a consequence of all these studies, our knowledge of the theory and practice of school based management is increasing rapidly.

Finally, there is a growing and influential constituency in favor of reforming public education at the school level. A major obstacle to change in public education has been the solid opposition of the educational establishment and the indifference of school employees and the public. The continuing failure of public schools to meet the public's expectations has begun to divide the educational community. Teachers are tired of being blamed for the failure of students they are powerless to help. If they are to be held accountable for the performance of students they want to have more to say about the education being offered. School based management appeals to the teacher's desire to be treated as a professional by being given a stronger role in decisions affecting the local school program.

Parents are also demanding a stronger voice in school affairs. They have been stimulated by federal requirements for citizen participation in programs such as ESEA Title 1,[8] and the Education for All Handicapped

Children Act, and by the national organizations representing the interests of parents such as the National Committee for Citizens in Education and the Institute for Responsive Education, and they are becoming organized.[9] Parents are more interested in a particular school than in a school district, so it is natural that they have sought to be heard at that level. The prospect of a coalition of teachers and parents supporting a program to give more decision-making discretion to local school building personnel is enough to make even the most cynical admit to the possibility of changing the imperious school bureaucracy.

The purpose of this *Bulletin* is to present the arguments for school based management. Alternative governance arrangements are not considered. Nor is it possible at this time to evaluate the effectiveness of school based management. Section II explores the origins of this reform strategy. Section III describes possible implementation of school based management. Section IV speculates on the future of school based management.

II.

The Origins of School Based Management

It is usually impossible to pinpoint the first idea that ultimately leads to a proposal for reforming a political institution. This is certainly true with school based management. American political history resounds with debates on the advantages and disadvantages of centralized versus decentralized government. The common school movement in America was originally organized at the local level to keep schools close to the people. Local control of the schools, originally instituted to make them responsive to the people, nevertheless proved to be cumbersome, and it frequently obscured the state's responsibility for providing every child with a basic education. In the pursuit of greater accountability and higher professional standards, the pendulum of school governance, which in the early days of this country swung toward representativeness and local control, later swung back toward greater professional autonomy and stronger executive control.[10]

Between the 1920s and 1970s, the governance of public education has become more and more centralized. The consolidation of school districts, designed to increase the authority of education executives, has also increased the distance between educational managers and the public.[11]

Centralization has made it more difficult for teachers to influence education policy. As school systems have come increasingly under the dominance of professional managers, teachers have lost their ability to communicate freely with their superiors. Furthermore, teachers' discretion over classroom procedures has been eroded by management's efforts to introduce educational innovations. Control of public education clearly has shifted to the level of the educational managers who have been given a virtual monopoly

over educational decision making. Subsequent demands for decentralization, citizen participation, and community schools reflect a public desire to nudge the pendulum back toward greater representativeness in the organization of public education.

School based management follows in the tradition of other proposals to improve education by administrative decentralization. The rough outlines of school based management seem to have been formulated by the staff of the New York State Fleischmann Commission in 1971.[12] The concept was further developed in staff papers presented to Florida's Governor's Citizens' Committee on Education in 1973. According to that report, a school-centered organization of instruction would embrace the following principles:

- Funds would be allocated to schools based on needs of children in schools.
- Specific educational objectives of a school would be set by people associated with the school.
- How funds for instruction would be spent would be decided in the school.
- The organization of instruction would be determined at the school level.
- Parents would participate in school decision making.[13]

Although the Governor's Citizens' Committee did not directly address the issue of local school district decision-making processes, a number of the recommendations in the Committee's report were intended to produce a restructuring of local decision making. These recommendations include school-by-school accounting and reporting, strengthening the role of the school principal as manager, annual reports of school progress, school advisory councils, and student choice of programs offered within a cluster of schools.[14]

Recent reforms in California have also focused on the individual school. The Early Childhood Education program directs state funds to schools which prepare school plans for improving education in the first three grades.[15] The school improvement portion of California's latest school finance reform legislation, (AB 65), requires the establishment of local school site councils. Under the terms of the legislation, school site councils are responsible for developing a school improvement plan, continually reviewing implementation of the plan, reviewing and updating the plan and establishing the annual school improvement budget.

Despite legislation in both Florida and California designed to shift decision-making responsibility to the school level, school based management is still a long way from being the dominant mode of administration in those two states or in any others for that matter. There is much resistance among educators to the idea of decentralizing decision making and particularly to including teachers and parents more fully in decision-making processes. A major problem surrounding the implementation of school based management, or any reform proposal, is that most educators do not understand the rationale behind the proposed reform and therefore resist any change in behavior it requires.

The Rationale Behind School Based Management[16]

It is perhaps unfortunate that the name school based management was attached to the reforms in Florida and California. The label makes it sound like another management innovation, such as "management-by-objectives" or "zero-based budgeting." The label suggests a set of specific activities or procedures requiring new information and expertise.

In fact, school based management is neither new nor a specific program of activities. School based management is rather an incorporation of many proposals for returning certain decisions to school personnel and parents. It is an attempt to reverse the trend toward increasing centralization of educational policy making so that those persons closest to school children have more to say about policies affecting those children. School based management is not a new management system, in other words, but rather a fancy name for attempts to encourage a greater sharing of decision making between central district offices (which in recent years have taken over more of the management of schools) and schools (which in the past made many more of the day-to-day decisions).

In Florida, California and elsewhere, school based management has been translated into specific activities. Among these are school-centered lump-sum budgeting, allocation of staff positions; parent or citizen school advisory committees; cost accounting at the school level; principal accountability for school budgeting; shared decision making; hiring, assignment, and firing of school personnel at the school level; school-by-school curriculum planning; open enrollment; and school performance reports. Each district or state may emphasize different activities or groups of activities. Underlying all these interpretations of school based management, however, is the belief that education will be improved by moving more educational decisions to the school level.

There are several reasons for this belief. First, school based management gives those who are more familiar with students' problems--principals

and teachers--greater responsibility for the education of children. Since the educational needs of children in different schools or even in the same school are not always the same, principals and teachers are in the best position to respond to the differences. Second, proponents believe that parent involvement in their children's education is essential for improving educational quality. The most important contacts between parents and school personnel take place, not at the district level, but at the school building. Parents and students are more interested in their particular school than in the district, and consequently, they are more likely to become involved at the school site. Third, by dividing districts into school units, the opportunities for parent participation are increased, while the scope of education problems considered and the number of people involved at any one meeting are reduced. This makes it easier to respond to parent preferences and increases the chances of each parent to influence school policy. Finally by involving school-level personnel in more decisions, the likelihood of those decisions being effectively implemented is increased.

School Based Management and Equal Educational Opportunity

The idea that decentralized decision making will improve educational quality needs to be developed further because it seems to contradict much conventional wisdom about public education. For example, most people believe that a more centralized organization of public education will improve the opportunities of children from poor and minority families and thereby raise educational quality. A more centralized organization of any public service usually reduces the disparity among services provided by individual units.

If communities begin with unequal resources, centralized action can often substantially reduce the inequalities.

This conventional wisdom makes sense when applied to school finances. Some sort of centralized school finance system is necessary to reduce the disparities in educational opportunities between opportunities of poor children and rich children. Yet it does not necessarily follow that centralizing and standardizing other aspects of schooling is desirable.

Providing equal educational opportunity has been the major objective behind many of the actions centralizing school administration, including desegration of schools, statewide assessment, and competency based education. However, a combination of technical changes (particularly the automobile which has broken the tie between one's place of work and one's residence) and school policies (which limit a child's school attendance to the neighborhood school) have conspired to reduce the state's ability to equalize educational opportunity by these means. With families sorting themselves out residentially along income and racial lines, and with schools tied to residence, the ideal of a common school providing a cross-section of children with a uniform education has been lost. We now have a range of publicly supported schools from wealthy suburban schools catering to the children of high income white parents to poor urban schools for predominately minority students.

Most observers believe that residential segregation creates inequality of educational opportunity. As James Coleman points out, "Even if children don't learn from one another and through competing with one another (which is unlikely), the teacher must teach to the level of the class, making a

child's learning dependent on others in his class. Parents, children, and school staff recognize this: a school is regarded as a 'good school' or 'bad school' more on the basis of its student body than anything else."[17]

In the past ten years there have been numerous attempts to correct the inequalities resulting from economic and racial segregation of schools. The most direct effort has been to use school busing to break the link between residential segregation and school attendance. Yet serious economic and political obstacles make it seem unlikely that the ideal of a common school can be achieved by busing. And even beyond these obstacles, one wonders whether the common school would result in the equality of opportunity. If the common school program also included a common curriculum then it would not provide equal opportunity because students enter schools with widely varying educational experiences and abilities.

School based management represents another approach to providing equal educational opportunity. It assumes that children in different communities within single school districts have different educational needs and styles. By permitting those people closest to these communities--parents and teachers--to make more of the educational policy decisions affecting a particular school, it is hoped those particular educational needs and styles can be better served. School based management, in other words, encourages school program diversity so as to promote equality of educational outcomes rather than inputs. Without programs tailored to serve individual students or groups of students, it is difficult to accomplish anything more than superficial dollar equality among schools and students in a district.

School Based Management and Efficiency

For many years it was felt that schools could be run more efficiently if their administration was centralized. The overall quality of education would be improved because less money would be spent on administration and more could be allocated to educational instruction. Centralization has not appreciably increased the efficiency of schools, however.[18] Most research on the subject indicates that there are few economies realized once a district has grown to a few thousand students. In fact, there appears to be increased spending associated with size. The per pupil costs of administration tend to be much higher in large districts than in medium and small ones.[19]

Proponents of school based management have another view of efficiency in education. They see efficiency in terms of matching available resources with the educational needs of children in schools. Centralized administration provides uniform service for its members. This is efficient only if the preferences and needs of individuals being served are similar. If they are different, then centralized provision may be inefficient. Decentralized units of government, on the other hand, can provide service to match the preferences of a particular community. Decentralized government thus offers the prospect of increased efficiency by providing a greater range of services. This system is more efficient because it is more likely to match the skills and interest of teachers with the educational preferences and requirements of particular students--even though there may be small increases in administrative costs.

School Based Management and Administrative Feasibility

One of the most persistent complaints about school based management is that it is impossible because of the many state and federal education regulations and the state constitutional requirements of a uniform education. Collective bargaining, federal comparability requirements, the legal responsibility of school board members, and numerous other state laws all demand, critics claim, a strong, centrally-oriented school district. Implicit in the argument is the notion that only a centrally-run school administration can effectively implement the provisions of the many federal, state, and district regulations.

Proponents of school based management point out that increasing centralization of school districts over the past 30 years apparently has not led to full implementation of federal, state or district regulations. In most states, education codes or laws are frequently ignored at the local level. Schools seem to go on operating much as they always have regardless of larger central administrations and legislation designed to change education. In fact, one of the arguments used by the proponents of collective bargaining is that state regulations are not enforced, and only contracts negotiated and monitored by teachers' unions can protect the interests of teachers and ensure educational quality for students.

A major difference between supporters of a strong central administration and supporters of school based management is their understanding of how educational organizations operate. Many professional administrators equate educational organizations with business organizations. In business, policies are made at the top and passed down the organizational hierarchy to be

administered by employees at the service level of the organization. The linkages between levels of organization are well understood, making it relatively easy to control the behavior of employees at each descending level. In education, this type of organization would mean that legislative actions are translated into rules and regulations by the department of education. District superintendents would then ensure that the intentions of the legislature as interpreted by the department of education are carried out at the school building level. Principals would receive orders from the superintendent and in turn give orders to classroom teachers who would willingly comply with them.

Proponents of school based management see quite a different kind of organization when they look at public schools. Rather than seeing a neatly hierarchical organization, with clear linkages between each level of the organization, they view educational organizations as loosely structured with little control exercised between levels of the organization.[20] Each sub-unit of education, in their view, is surprisingly autonomous. Each chooses whether to comply with the regulations and rules established at the level above. The department of education implements those aspects of legislation it supports and frequently ignores other legislative mandates. District superintendents can choose to ignore state regulations with virtual impunity. School principals may or may not follow board policy. And classroom teachers can do almost anything once the classroom door has been shut.

Many educational statutes over the past 20 years have been designed to tighten up educational administration. School district consolidation was purported to be a means of providing a more uniform school program and of

providing education more efficiently. It was supposed to give educators more control over curriculum and spending. New statutes designed to give state officials more control over education have swollen state education codes. Despite these efforts, school districts and school-level personnel remain remarkably immune from centralized control yet increasingly frustrated by the paperwork and effort required to meet the formalistic requirements of higher level administrators.

If educational organizations are as loosely structured as the proponents of school based management believe, then school based management is not only a practical way to administer schools, but may be the only way. If school principals and classroom teachers can do pretty much as they please, then the only way to bring about educational change is for them to voluntarily comply with the proposed changes. The failures of so much educational reform legislation can be traced to the resistance of those educators who ultimately must implement the reforms, but who have not participated in either defining the problem or designing the solutions. Thus, many reforms are seen by local people as irrelevant to their problems or unfeasible. School based management is a system of shared decision making in which principals, teachers, and parents all have a part in making decisions they are ultimately responsible for implementing. By participating in the decision-making process they learn why the decision was made and also have a personal stake in seeing that the decision is carried out effectively. Decentralized decision making, in other words, may be a necessary condition for effective implementation of policy in loosely structured organizations.

Balancing Centralization and Decentralization

Determining the appropriate size of political units or the appropriate balance between centralized and decentralized decision making is one of the

most frequently recurring issues in the theory of democracy. Political scientist Robert Dahl has written that determination of the optimal size of democratic political units involves an inescapable dilemma.[21] The larger government is, the more it can regulate those aspects of the environment its citizens want regulated. The larger the unit, however, and the more complicated its machinery, the less its citizens can participate in its decision making. Conversely, the smaller the unit, the greater the chance for citizen participation, but the more limited its range of control over the environment.

School based management recognizes the immediate and important relationship between parent and teacher involvement in the education of an individual child and the quality of education that child receives. Without that intimate and caring educational environment, the political and economic advantages of centralized administration, if there are any, produce few educational benefits. Consequently, proponents of school based management are willing to sacrifice some of the control implicit in centralization. In exchange, school based management produces more effective implementation of education programs through greater participation and involvement in planning at the school level.

In sum, school based management is not a new management technique; it deals with the perennial problem of balancing centralized management and decentralized decision making; and its intent is to improve educational opportunities and the quality of education received by public school children.

Assumptions and Biases

Before outlining the ingredients of a school based management arrangement, it is important to be as specific as possible about the assumptions and biases which underlie the proposed design. Failure to be clear about such assumptions often leads to inconsistent proposals and encourages skeptics to read sinister motives into the proposed reform.

The first assumption may seem obvious: public schools are productive

and necessary. This assumption must be made explicit, because it has become popular to blame the ills of the world on schools and suggest that we would all be better off if schools were abolished.[22] Some suggest that schools are only a reflection of the society at large and that the social structure itself must be changed before schools can be improved.[23] The proponents of school site managment are not so pessimistic. While there is no doubt that schools have problems, they do continue to teach most American children how to read, write, and do simple arithmetic. The reforms proposed here are made on the assumption that these things can be done successfully by schools and that they can be done better if the decision-making arrangements of public schools, their constitutions so to speak, were changed.[24]

Second, although schools are productive and necessary, there are limits to what good schools can do. One of the biggest problems of public schools is that they have been oversold. They have been asked to do more than they possibly can. Schools can teach students such things as reading, writing and science. Schools are not very good at creating an integrated society, enforcing discipline, reducing the use of drugs, or dealing with health problems. In other words, schools are good for some things but not for all things. They cannot solve the social problems of the country. When they have been asked to do so, they have failed, not only in their new responsibilities, but also in many of their traditional responsibilities.

To recognize the limits of formal education is not to say that all schools should teach the same basic reading, writing, and arithmetic courses. A third assumption is that there is no one best way of producing

education in all schools. This assumption lies at the heart of school based management reforms. Our centrally organized hierarchical system of public schools is built on the notion that education is a science and that with enough information, educational professionals can agree on the best school program for all children. School based management recognizes that teaching is still primarily an art and that education is something that happens between teachers and students in rather inexplicable ways. Two teachers using seemingly contradictory techniques often have similarly good results, while two teachers using the same pedagogy have very different results. There are many effective ways of educating children.

Fourth, supporters of school based management challenge the prevailing view that school administration should be hierarchically ordered and responsible to a single center of power (the school board). Such a hierarchy reduces, they believe, the capability of administrative units to respond to citizens and parents. What is more, it increases the costs of administering schools as measured by time, effort, and resources required to carry out the schools' business. Vincent Ostrom suggests that two conditions are necessary for providing services responsive to diverse public preferences and rapidly changing conditions: (1) sharing of authority among units within a large school district and (2) the development of multiple jurisdictions of different size and responsibilities.[25]

The preference for decentralized and shared authority goes beyond a concern for efficiency alone. Local control of public institutions is fundamental to a democracy. Being involved in decisions at the local level is an important right in a democracy and an important responsibility in self-government. Shared decision making between a central office and local

schools is also a good way of protecting the public from official and bureaucratic abuses. Professional educators are no worse or no better than the average citizen. If the authority to make decisions rests solely with the professional administration, administrators will tend to use that authority for their own advantage. By dividing authority among many centers in a large organization, decision makers control one another and limit potential abuses.

A fifth assumption is that parents can be expected to do a better job of making decisions regarding their childrens' education than can professional educators. The argument is that children are more likely to be listened to by parents within the intimate family setting than by busy teachers. Parents are more likely to understand a child's feelings and care about the education a child receives. Most important, parents are likely to have a stronger interest in promoting the education of their children and ending dependency than would government employees whose roles are contingent to some degree on having children within their control.[26]

Only the fourth and fifth assumptions have the potential for controversy. Educators are ambivalent about the efficiency of bureaucracies. On the one hand, we say that if only schools were run like business we would get more service for our educational dollar. Clearly this suggests that more efficiency would result from a neat hierarchical ordering of professionally trained educators responsible to a single authority. On the other hand, such a bureaucracy often results in inefficiency, delay, red tape, and lack of responsiveness.

The preference for a fragmented and decentralized school system rests

on a different definition of efficiency. It defines efficiency in terms of how well a school system delivers the different kinds of services needed by different kinds of students. A decentralized school system is more efficient in much the same way the free marketplace is efficient. It can respond more quickly and specifically to educational demands of individual parents and students.

Many educators question the assumption that parents will make good educational choices for their children. They point to low participation in school elections and in parent advisory committees to suggest that many parents--especially poor parents--do not care about education. Yet this inference is not necessarily true. One explanation why parents do not participate in school affairs is that their participation is ineffective. Their participation makes no difference. Only relatively affluent parents can afford to spend time involved in inconsequential activities. Given real choices affecting the quality of their children's educations, many more parents would quickly become involved in making choices in the best interests of their children.

III.

Implementing School Based Management

School based management has been implemented to the greatest extent in Florida and California. Analyses of statutes, administrative rules, and actual practice in those states provide clues as to how school based management might be implemented elsewhere.[27] The National Urban Coalition report on school based management identifies seven principles underlying this strategy for improving education in Florida and California. They are:

1. The most important contact between educators and client takes place not at the district level but at the school site.

2. Parents should be advisors to principals.

3. Principals are to be held responsible for the performance of children in schools. Therefore, they must have the authority to make changes in personnel, budget and curriculum.

4. A key to determining improvement in the quality of education is the use of some measure of student achievement.

5. Parents and other citizens should receive annual reports of school performance.

6. To achieve a better match between programs and student needs, school site managers should have budgetary discretion over expenditures such as personnel, materials and supplies, capital outlay, and maintenance.

7. Families should have the option to choose among programs available within the school district.[28]

Underlying these principles is a reform strategy requiring an alteration in the organization of public schools. By organization we mean the allocation of decision-making responsiblities among the people engaged in providing and using educational services. In other words, school based management proposes a new constitution for public education. The new constitution assigns responsibilities and limitations on the authority of each of the major actors

in the system of public education. And like a constitution, a school based management system often has a bill of rights. A full-fledged school base management system should specify the rights of administrators, teachers, and most importantly, students.

Decentralizing Decision-Making

The essential question in school based management is thus: which decisions should be made at the school level and which decisions should be made at the district level? In general the Florida and California experiences suggest that those decisions required to properly manage a school should be made at the school level. Those that are less essential to the actual provision of school services and which can be more efficiently made at a more central level should remain at the district level.

If the school is to become the primary unit of management, those decisions affecting resource utilization and accountability should be made at the school site. Selection, assignment, training, and transfer of personnel should be school-level decisions. Curriculum planning, development, and evaluation also affect the way services are delivered and should be school based. Most budgeting decisions about how funds are to be used to provide services can also be made locally. On the other hand, decisions affecting the allocation of resources within a district and the provision of district-wide services should remain at the central office level.

It would be unwise and impossible to specify here exactly which decisions should be made at the school level and which should be made centrally. The specific division of labor between these two levels varies among school districts studied in Florida and California depending upon local circumstances.

The important thing to remember is that decentralization does not mean that all decisions are made at the lowest level. There is a presumption, however, that decisions will be made locally unless there is a compelling advantage to having particular decisions made centrally. Decentralization in itself is neither good nor bad. What it does mean is that decisions will be made at a level which offers the greatest potential for increasing the relevance of the educational program.

School people will differ in their beliefs about what aspects of administration can be decentralized depending largely on their roles in the school system. Evidence of this difference is found in the results of a survey distributed in 1976 by the California Association of School Business Officials. This survey was undertaken to discover the effectiveness of decentralization as a management technique in the administration of public schools.[29] The survey was conducted in 39 school districts identified as having implemented some degree of decentralized management. Questionnaires were sent to superintendents, business managers, principals, school board presidents, and presidents of certified and classified employee associations asking their opinions on what aspects of administration can be most effectively decentralized. The following list reflects the general consensus of the respondents (with those who disagreed with the consensus indicated in parentheses):

Areas of Administration Which Should be Decentralized

- Budget and fiscal planning
- Accounting
- Personnel, classified and certificated (business officials, personnel directors, and employee association presidents disagreed)
- Curriculum development (school board presidents disagreed)
- Counseling and pupil personnel services (superintendents disagreed)
- Public relations
- Civic center use of facilities

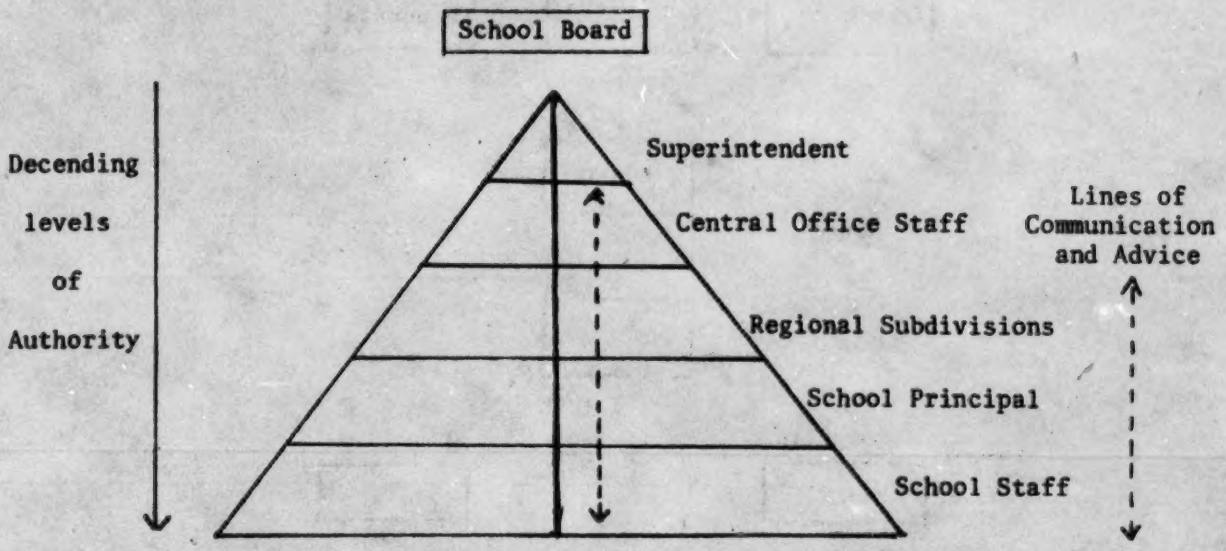
Areas of Administration Which Should NOT be Decentralized

- Transportation (principals disagreed)
- Plant maintenance (principals and employee association presidents disagreed)
- Custodial services (principals and employee association presidents disagreed)
- Equipment maintenance
- Facilities planning (no consensus)
- Purchasing (principals and employee association presidents disagreed)
- Warehousing
- Food services (employee association presidents disagreed)
- Data processing
- Research and evaluation (no consensus)

This survey supports the conclusion that decisions related to the delivery of school programs (personnel, curriculum and budgeting) can be effectively decentralized while those decisions which provide supportive services (transportation, maintenance, warehousing, data processing, etc.) should remain centralized. It is also instructive that most objections to decentralization come from central office personnel while most objections to decisions remaining centralized come from principals and employee association presidents. The survey also suggests that most principals and teachers are willing to accept more responsibility for decision making than central office personnel are probably willing to give them.

Decentralized decision making also requires a new set of organizational arrangements. The typical centralized school district has a hierarchical school organization in which decisions typically flow downward through successive levels of bureaucracy. Figure 1 is an example of how such an organization can be visualized.[30]

Figure 1. A Centralized School District

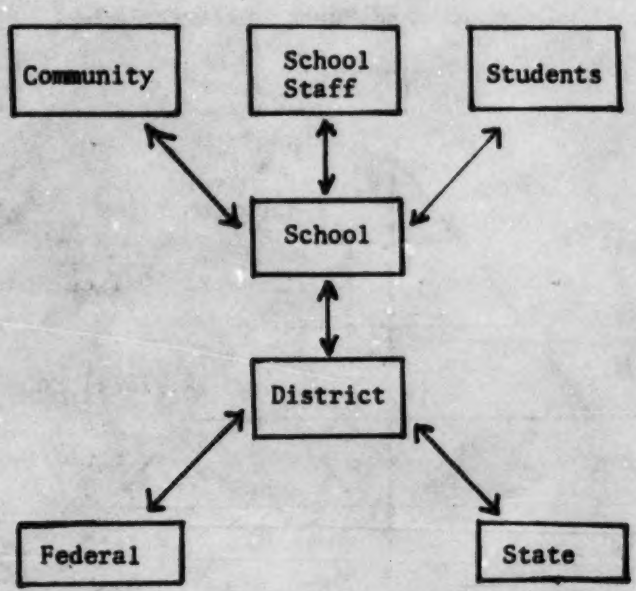


A decentralized school organization has fewer levels of bureaucracy and decisions are made at every level of the organization. Instead of decisions flowing from the top to the bottom of the hierarchy, a decentralized system has a constitution specifying which decisions are made at each level and also specifying the procedures for amending how future decisions are made. Figure 2 is an example of how a decentralized school organization can be visualized. (see next page)

Changes Required at the District Level

The most difficult task for the proponents of school based management has been to describe clearly what the appropriate role of the central school administration is. There are many examples of excellent autonomous public and private schools.[31] There are fewer examples of central office arrangements in a decentralized school system.[32] One possibility is a task force management

Figure 2. A Decentralized School District



structure similar to that developed by NASA and other research and development organizations. Instead of having a large staff of professional educators assigned to specific tasks and related to each other by clear lines of authority, a superintendent would have a small staff in which each member worked on a variety of problems as they arose. A central office employee might be assigned to a project group responsible for developing a busing plan. The same employee might also be developing a new budget format with four or five other employees, be monitoring Title 1 programs, and evaluating a new program monitoring system. When the busing plan is completed, the employee would be shifted to another project while completing his or her other assigned tasks. There would be no permanent lines of authority and an employee would be responsible to the project leader only for as long as he or she is working on the project.

Whatever the organizational arrangement, the role of central office

personnel would change from making decisions and insuring that those decisions are carried out by subordinates, to facilitating the decisions made largely by employees at the school level. The change from decision maker to facilitator would require an understanding and commitment to the principles of decentralized management, and a willingness to live with the good and bad decisions of other pepole in the system. Instead of monopolizing decision making as most school district administrations do, the appropriate role of the central administration in a decentralized system is to encourage others to make informed decisions. The principal challenge in such a role is to increase active decision making by developing interest, providing training, providing incentives, and supplying information so that as many citizens, teachers, and school administrators as possible become involved in school level decision making.

Changes Required at the School Level

Most school personnel are poorly equipped to manage a school. Principals and teachers have become accustomed to doing what central office administrators tell them to do. The shift from centralized to school based management requires many changes at the school level.

Principals

The most dramatic changes are required of the school principal. The role of the principal changes from being the head teacher to being an educational manager. Being an educational manager does not mean that a principal becomes a little superintendent who makes decisions and then passes those decisions down to the classroom teachers to be implemented. Being a manager means working with teachers, students, parents, the community, and

the central district administration in developing and administering the school program. The emphasis should not be on principal power but rather on shared decision making.

Specifically, school principals need to be competent in four important areas of management: personnel management, program management, public relations, and budgeting, probably in about that order of importance. The principal's personnel responsibilities are perhaps the most challenging. The authority to hire personnel is essential if the principal is to be held accountable for the school's performance, since the classroom teacher remains the critical link in the education process. Without the ability to hire and assign teachers, the principal would have little control over school performance. Hiring and assigning personnel is only a part of a principal's personnel responsibility, however. Mechanisms must be developed for involving teachers in the development and management of the school's program. Whether a principal establishes an elected teachers' council or assigns teachers to management teams, the principal must include teachers in the making and implementation of school policy.

In order to do this effectively, the current procedures for collective bargaining may need to be modified. In most areas of the country, teachers' representatives negotiate with district school boards over terms and conditions of employment. Since districts are likely to continue raising money for public schools, teachers will probably insist on negotiating salary schedules and working conditions at the district level.

Yet other aspects of collective bargaining could be moved to the school level. Negotiations could be carried on between teachers and the school principal on matters concerning the hiring, assignment and transfer of

personnel. To insure that a principal can employ teachers who fit in with the school program, seniority rights probably should be granted only within a particular school.

The most important change from current collective bargaining practices would include the addition of school building bargaining on the content of the school program. Teachers in each school would sit down with the principal and parent and community representative to develop each year's educational program. Members of the press and the community would be permitted to observe those sessions. Final settlement of a district-wide economic agreement would be contingent upon the signing of local school site program contracts.

Besides being a personnel manager under school based management, the principal also must be a program manager. For some principals this would not be a difficult transition. Most principals were once classroom teachers and many like to maintain close contact with activities in the classroom. Being a program manager is more complicated than simply monitoring classroom practices, however. It involves assessing the educational preferences of the community and the requirements of students in the school, establishing educational objectives for the students, matching the skills and interests of teachers with the educational requirements and styles of students, developing ways of assessing the achievement of classroom objectives, monitoring the performance of teachers and students, and reporting on the successes and failures to the community and the district. Each of these requires sophisticated management skills, and most principals will need training in these skills.

Most principals today regard public relations as simply informing parents of events in the school. Under school based management, competence in public relations requires more than making periodic reports to the public. It requires the ability to communicate with the public in the sense of both learning about their preferences and concerns and providing citizens with information to help them make decisions about the school's educational programs. Principals must learn to work with parent groups and citizen councils as deliberative and decision-making groups, not as just an administrative arm of the principal's office. Principals need to know more about education law so that they can represent the interests of parents and students rather than merely telling them to see the district's lawyer. In short, the principal must learn to represent the interests of school teachers, parents, students and the community in negotiations with central office administrators.

Finally, under school based management principals must also become financial managers. This is mentioned last because although much emphasis has been given to school site budgeting, it is probably the least important change required to implement school site management. It is true that power follows dollars and that for principals to have the authority to make decisions they must also have some control over the school budget. Nevertheless, approximately 80 percent of a school's budget is consumed by personnel costs which are set by collective negotiations at the district level. Most of the remaining 20 percent is required to pay fixed costs such as utilities, maintenance food service, and janitorial services. The amount of discretionary money at the school level is relatively small.

School site budgeting is an essential element of school based management, yet it in itself will not produce an autonomous self-governing school.

One type of school site budgeting that would be appropriate for school based management would involve a two-step budgeting process.[33] First, school districts would allocate funds to schools and develop an accounting procedure to insure that district funds were properly utilized. District superintendents and school boards would determine the amount of money available for the public schools in each district. A total operating budget for the district would be established, then funds would be allocated to each school in unrestricted lump sums. Each school would be entitled to a specified amount for each enrolled child. The district might want to vary the amount for different age groups, or for handicapped or otherwise disadvantaged children. Nevertheless, once district revenues and enrollments were established, each school's revenues would be computed by multiplying the number of students in the school by the amount available for each category of students.

The second step of the process, actual budgeting at the school site, would be more complex than at the district level. Two budget formats would be needed to obtain the best use of funds within a school. First, to insure that funds would be spent properly, the school would need a simple line-item or object budget that would indicate how funds received by the school were actually spent. Both state and district regulations require such information to protect against the misappropriation of public funds.

In addition, a second budget format would be compatible with the principals of school based management. This would be a "work flow budget"

that measures how students are progressing through a course or series of courses toward some defined objective and the cost of moving from one level to another. For example, if improving reading skills is the goal, then information would be collected showing each student's progress through the reading curriculum. Work-flow budgets showing the cost of moving students from one level of reading skill to another would enable parents and teachers to decide when and where to spend resources in the reading program. If it is discovered, for example, that 60 percent of each year's reading achievement is lost during summer vacation, the school staff and the Parent Advisory Committee might want to reallocate resources to summer reading programs. Work-flow budgets help build knowledge of educational processes and provide data for more detailed program budgets. Most important, work-flow budgets enable teachers and parents to assist school principals and Parent Advisory Committees in deciding which programs work well and which do not. If program B moves students toward the goal of reading competence at half the cost of program A, then there is a rational basis for selecting program B over A. Until this kind of technical work-flow information is available, it will be difficult to reallocate resources in a manner that will maintain quality education.

Teachers

While the role of the principal has received most of the attention in school based management, teachers are also given new responsibilities under this decentralization plan. In most large educational bureaucracies, teachers are at the bottom of the hierarchy. Instead of being treated as professionals, teachers are expected to carry out the orders of their

immediate superior. School based management recognizes the central role of the teacher in the educational process and attempts to treat teachers as educational professionals. Instead of being judged on their ability to follow orders teachers are judged on their ability to achieve educational results.

For teachers to be treated as professionals, a number of specific changes are needed. Teachers should be given more discretion over classroom activities and be held accountable for their students' performance. Working with parents, students, and administrators, teachers should be given more responsibility for program planning, development and evaluation. Whether teachers participate through faculty councils or teaching teams, they should be involved directly in program decisions since they are the ones who must ultimately implement those programs. The California and Florida reforms have not yet addressed these issues.

The incentive system in schools should also be changed to reward classroom teaching if teachers are to become true professionals. Under the present pay schedules, teachers are the lowest paid professionals in most school systems. The path to higher wages is out of and away from the classroom. The more remote from children one is, the more one gets paid. This should be reversed. Excellent teachers should be the highest paid professionals in a school with the possible exception of the school principal. Teachers also should be awarded merit increases for excellent teaching and the seniority system should be relaxed to permit promotion on the basis of performance. If teachers are to be treated as professionals, they must accept some of the responsibilities and risks of professionalism.

As school staffs become more comfortable with shared decision making, they might experiment with a variety of incentive plans to improve classroom performance. One such plan, which has been proposed by Stephen Sugarman, would give teachers an account upon which they could draw as trustees on behalf of students.[34] This teacher-trustee plan would give the teacher a specific amount of money, say $200 per child, to use as the teacher saw fit for his or her students' benefit. The only restriction on the use of the money would be that the money be spent in ways that are lawful and that teachers would be required to report to the families of student beneficiaries on the use of the money. The trust accounts could be used for classroom materials, field trips, individual or group tutors, counseling or for any purpose consistent with the teacher's educational philosophy. The idea behind this plan and other incentive plans is to increase the professionalism and commitment of teachers by giving them more responsibility for decisions affecting classroom activities.

Citizen Participation in School Decision Making

Increased parent and citizen participation in school decision making is an integral part of school based management everywhere it has been tried. Parent advisory committees were required as part of Florida's 1973 educational reforms. School site councils are also required under California's School Improvement Program section of AB 65.[35]

There is no one best way of organizing a school council. Under the California law it is the responsibility of the governing board of the district to establish school site councils. The law also gives guidelines for districts

to follow in organizing school councils. For example, it specifies the following:

- A school site council should be established at each school which participates in the school improvement program authorized by this chapter. The council shall be composed of the principal and representatives of teachers selected by teachers at the school; other school personnel selected by other school personnel at the school; parents of pupils attending the school selected by such parents; and, in secondary schools, pupils selected by pupils attending the school.
- At the elementary level, the council shall be constituted to ensure parity between (a) the principal, classroom teachers, and other school personnel, and (b) parents or other community members selected by parents.
- At the secondary level, the council shall be constituted to ensure parity between (a) the principal, classroom teachers, and other school personnel, and (b) equal numbers of parents and pupils.
- At both the elementary and secondary schools, classroom teachers shall comprise the majority of persons represented under subdivision (a) of this section.
- Existing schoolwide advisory groups or school support groups may be utilized as the school site council if such groups conform to the provisions of this section.[36]

The California law leaves the decision on the size of the councils to districts or to schools, although the State Department of Education has provided several examples of possible composition patterns of school site councils.[37]

Selection and replacement of members is also left to local choice. The California law emphasizes the importance of including groups that have traditionally been excluded from school organizations, and the importance of having members selected by the groups they represent. Among the possible procedures that might be used are:

1. Nominating and electing representatives within each required group.

2. Appointment of the representatives to the school site councils by a committee of the group to be represented.

3. Open nomination of candidates by their peers at meetings for that purpose.

4. Election or selection by peer group following volunteering for the position.[38]

The tasks of school councils will vary depending on state law and the problems facing each school. School councils must have more than a communication role if they are to be effective and maintain citizen interest. Structuring an appropriate policy role is not easy however, and will take time. Since the principal appears to be an important component of a school's success, it seems desirable that the school council should participate in the selection of the principal. Council participation in principal selection could be either from the "bottom-up" or by a "trickle-down" process. In the "bottom-up" approach, the council would interview applicants and recommend to the district board and administration a group of three to five acceptable candidates; the board and administration would then make the final choice. In the "trickle-down" approach, the central administration or school board would narrow the field to a limited number of acceptable candidates and then permit the school council to make the final choice.

School councils need to be intimately involved in designing and evaluating the school program. In California, councils are required to develop the school's improvement plan. Whether developing a new plan or working with teachers on the school's regular program, the council should decide what students need to learn, assess the capabilities of both the school's teachers and programs to teach those competencies, recommend changes for improving the effectiveness of school programs, and design a system for evaluating school programs.

Both Florida and California require councils to prepare an annual performance report which is widely distributed in the community. The reports vary in content and methods of preparation. Information on the school, the school staff, student performance, program strengths and program deficiencies, and surveys of opinions about the school from parents, teachers, and students probably ought to be included. Councils might work with the school staff in preparing the report; however, some sections should be reserved for the exclusive use by parents, students, and staff. It seems advisable to publish the report in the local newspaper, post it prominently in the school, and, most importantly, send it home to the parents or guardians of each student. It would be the primary printed instrument by which clients could assess the effectiveness of their local school.

Increasing Educational Choice

One purpose of school based management is to improve educational services by giving parents and children a larger voice in educational decisions. Many districts have augmented school councils with a policy of also permitting students freer choice among programs within a district. Teachers are given an incentive to provide alternative educational programs and parents can vote with their feet for the kind of educational experience they prefer for their children.

There are a variety of methods for increasing choice in school districts. Open enrollment is one way that has been extensively tried and is a possibility in many districts. Another technique might be the use of educational coupons to permit students to purchase services not available in most schools or only infrequently available.[39] Under such a plan, students could purchase coupons

from the school district, the cost of which would be scaled to the student's family's income. Students from poor families would pay very little for coupons; students from rich families would pay a higher percentage of the costs. These coupons could be used to purchase additional services for children from public schools, private schools or individual tutors. Parents could spend their coupons on any kind of additional education they wish for their children: foreign language instruction, music, dance, technical training, etc. The intent is to encourage diversity and to improve the quality of services through competitions.

The intent of providing parents greater choice among programs or choice of optional courses with the use of coupons is to increase the sensitivity of schools to parent and student preferences. School administrators and teachers would learn that if they are not responsive to parent concerns, parents have the option of going elsewhere. The threat of using that option strengthens the voice of parents within regular school councils.

Changes Required at the State Level

In the two states that have taken the boldest steps to implement school based management, the state legislatures have played an important part in initiating the reforms. In Florida, administrative decentralization was initially recommended by a Governor's Citizens' Committee on Education. The Florida legislature enacted many of the Committee's recommendations although it did not mandate specifically that decision making be decentralized to the school level. The California legislature moved more directly to implement school based management as part of their 1977 school finance reform law. Another school centered program in California is the Early Childhood Education program that provides state funds to individual schools preparing plans for improving education in the first three grades.

Cutting State Requirements

An examination of the actions taken at the state level in Florida and California reveal a number of steps to facilitate school based management. One of the first actions taken in both states was to prune severely their overgrown state education codes. State requirements were cut back and both school districts and schools were given more leeway to manage schools in response to local conditions. It seems likely that further deregulation of schools is needed, however, for school based management to be fully implemented. Certification requirements should be relaxed so that principals have autonomy to hire highly qualified persons who nevertheless lack a few of the courses necessary for certification. Regulation of textbook adoptions and of course content should also be eliminated leaving those decisions to the professional judgment of individual teachers. Whenever possible, the state should rely on reporting requirements to ensure that state funds are being appropriately used for the students' benefit.

Management Information Systems

Both Florida and California also have better than average state-level management information systems. An adequate data base is a necessary condition for the decentralization of decision making. Before being willing to delegate authority to school personnel, both state and district officials, who are legally responsible for providing educational services, must have some way of monitoring school performance. A well designed reporting system allows them to monitor school level behavior without having to control it by monopolizing decision-making procedures.

Funding

Delegating decision making to the school site does not reduce the state's role in funding education. In Florida and California, efforts to decentralize school administration were accompanied by substantial increases in state support of local schools. In fact, a relatively high level of state support and a relatively equalized school finance system are probably prerequisites to meaningful decentralization. For without it, only the relatively affluent schools are likely to have sufficient resources to alter local programs to meet local needs. Low expenditure schools must struggle simply to provide the minimum program required by the state or the school district administration.

State Performance Standards

Experience in Florida and elsewhere suggests that states need to be involved in establishing performance standards for schools. Public pressure for higher standards in public schools is forcing states to establish minimum standards and to develop procedures for ensuring that the standards are met. This requires statewide examinations to assess student achievement in at least the areas of reading and mathematics, since these subjects are commonly accepted as minimal learning skills for each child. Consequently, it is highly probable that an annual statewide assessment of children's achievement in these two areas would be publicly acceptable. Florida's eleventh grade functional literacy examination in these two subjects has been received favorably by most citizens even though a relatively high percentage of students failed the examination. If state legislatures desired, they also might make other areas subject to competency standards

and testing. The problem is to have enough standards to ensure that children receive adequate educations, yet enough flexibility to permit local program variations consistent with the diversity of local interests.

Stimulating Change

Finally, states may have to stimulate school-level decision making. The forces of tradition and inertia will make implementation of school based management difficult. District personnel will probably resist delegating their prerogatives to school-level personnel. Many principals and teachers will find it easier to continue following district directives than striking out on their own. In order to overcome this inertia, the state may have to intervene at the local level. Simply mandating that decisions be decentralized probably will not work. Both district personnel and school personnel seem able to absorb such requirements without changing their behavior.

Rather than merely mandating new procedures, the state can be more effective by publicizing examples of local citizen involvement in school affairs and by providing financial incentives to schools developing programs at the school level. More specifically, states might provide training grants to districts for the purpose of training school personnel in the techniques of school management. Even more promising are grants to individual schools which prepare plans for improving educational programs at the school level. California's Early Childhood Education program is a good model for such an incentive scheme.

The state's role in school based management is to establish the conditions which make local decision making possible and then to stimulate change by providing examples of how school districts can decentralize decision

making to the school level. States can also stimulate change by providing financial incentives to districts and schools which choose to decentralize administration to the school level.

IV

The Prospects for School Based Management

Reform of any large institution is never easy, particularly one as entrenched as public schools. Approximately 70 billion dollars are spent annually on public schools, and millions of people who benefit from the existing arrangement will vigorously oppose reform. Those who might benefit from a new arrangement are likely to be disorganizaed and only half-hearted in their support. There are several reasons for this foot dragging. Professional educators, who are active and politically influential, perceive the full costs of the proposed reforms while citizens, parents, and students only dimly see the promised benefits. Educational consumers' lack of enthusiasm for a reform such as school based management may also arise from their fear of those in power who oppose the change, and from their unwillingness to believe in anything new until they have actually experienced it.[40]

The tendency for old institutions to persist and reforms to fail is elaborated on by Robert Dahl:

> It is generally easier to maintain old programs than to initiate new government policies. To maintain an existing program usually requires less change in the behavior and view of the people. What is more, once a program exists the program itself is likely to generate resources--time, money, organization, information--that can be used to win support for it; and the people employed in the program will ordinarily have strong incentives to preserve it. Nothing is harder to create than a new institution, nothing harder to destroy than an established one...[41]

Dahl continues with three additional propositions about the process of institutional reform:

> •The less a proposal deviates from prevailing ideas and ideology, the better its chance of success. Hence marginal changes stand a better chance than comprehensive changes....
>
> •In general, it is easier to veto a change than to initiate one, easier to preserve the status quo than to change it, easier to make technical changes than ideological changes, easier to make incremental changes than comprehensive or revolutionary changes....
>
> •It follows that supporters of the status quo usually need fewer resources, less skill, and lower political incentives to prevent changes than opponents of the status quo need in order to make changes. Reformers and radicals, then, require more resources, skills, and incentives than conservatives. Revolutionaries require even more.

One should not conclude from these propositions that reform of public education is impossible. As dissatisfaction increases among parents and teachers, the number of people preferring the status quo may become so small that the proponents of reform, even if poorly organized, may be successful in their efforts. The major point, however, is that we should not expect reform to occur quickly. It has taken about 150 years to develop our present school system and major reform of that institution will not occur in a year or even five years. Our goal should be modest change in approximately a decade. Efforts should be directed at small changes which when accumulated over time move schools in the direction of our agreed-upon goals.

Summary

In this *Bulletin* the experience of several states with school based management have been reviewed. Based on the experience, changes have been proposed at the state, district, and local levels designed to implement this educational improvement strategy.

At the state level, serveral suggestions were made. Regulations should be cut. State aid formulas should be equalized. Incentives should be provided to districts and schools wishing to experiment with decentralized management systems.

Even without these legislative changes, however, a number of changes will be needed at the district level if school based management is to be successfully implemented. Schools should be given more control over personnel and curriculum decisions. Budgetary flexibility should be given school personnel wherever possible. Parent advisory councils should be established at each school in large school districts, and these councils should be given important policy making responsibilities specifically in the selection of principals and the development and evaluation of school curriculum. An open enrollment policy is probably a good idea as long as such a policy does not violate desegregation plans.

Within schools, teachers and parents should be given opportunities to share in decisions affecting personnel, program planning, and budgeting. Efforts should be made to give teachers more responsibility for classroom programs and to make them accountable for student performance.

Proposals such as the two-tiered collective bargaining process, the teacher-trustee plan, and educational coupons, deserve experimentation even though they may be politically unfeasible today for general adoption.

Although reform will be slow to occur, the goal of improving public education by making it more understandable and responsive to teachers, parents and students is worth a long fight. The process of making education more democratic will be an important achievement in itself. Public schools

are the unit of government which is closest to the people and with which they are most familiar. If schools can be made more democratic, the public will be more likely to insist that other units of government listen to their suggestions and complaints. School based management would give citizens a stronger voice and greater choice in public education. Both of these qualities would help restore confidence in public education and possibly in democratic government itself.

Footnotes

1. There is a growing literature on school based management. For example, see James W. Guthrie and Edward Wynne (eds.), New Models for American Education (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), and Lawrence C. Pierce, School Site Management (Palo Alto, Calif.: Aspen Institute, 1977).

2. One of the best defenses of keeping schools close to the community is presented in John E. Coons, William H. Clune III, and Stephen D. Sugarman, Private Wealth and Public Education (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 14-20.

3. Reasons for the failure of past school reforms are outlined in an article by Walter I. Garms, James W. Guthrie, and Lawrence C. Pierce, "The Wonder is They Work At All" (forthcoming).

4. Florida's school based management program has been recently analyzed in a consultants' report to the Select Joint Committee on Public Schools of the Florida legislature, Improving Education in Florida: A Reassessment, 1978. Copies of the report are available from the Senate Education Committee, Florida legislature.

5. See: Badi G. Foster, Nicholas A. Fischer, and Kare K. Fischer, Summary Report, School Site Lump Sum Budgeting, A Report of the School Finance Reform Project, The National Urban Coalition, Washington, D.C., 1978.

6. Improving Education in Florida: A Reassessment, a report prepared for the Select Joint Committee on Public Schools, Florida legislature, February, 1978.

7. Thomas E. Keating, "Political Linkages and State Educational Reform," a dissertation accepted by the Faculty of Education of Claremont Graduate School, June, 1977. Diana K. Thomason, "Implementation of School Site Management in Florida and California," a dissertation in progress at the School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, California.

8. Several studies of parent participation in the ESEA Title 1 program have been completed. Of particular interest are the studies prepared for the National Institute of Education by the Institute for Responsive Education, Boston, Massachusetts and the Syracuse Research Corporation.

9. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, parents have formed a parents' union to increase their power relative to the local teachers' union and the Board of Education.

10. See: Herbert Kaufman, "Emerging Conflict in the Doctrines of Public Administration," in The Politics of the Federal Bureaucracy, Alan A. Alschuler (ed.), (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1968), pp. 72-87.

11. The following table displays the number of public schools and school districts in the United States from 1930 to 1972. There was an almost eightfold decline in the number of school districts and a threefold decline in schools. Most of the decline is accounted for by the elimination of one-teacher schools.

Year	School Districts	Schools	Schools (1 teacher)
1930	128,000	262,000	149,000
1940	117,000	210,000	114,000
1950	84,000	152,500	60,000
1960	40,000	117,700	20,000
1970	18,000	91,400	2,000
1972	16,960	90,800	1,475

Source: 1974 edition of The Digest of Educational Statistics (Washington, D.C.: Office of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 1974).

12. See: The Fleischmann Report on the Quality, Cost, and Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education in New York State (New York: The Viking Press, 1973).

13. See: Improving Education in Florida, A Report by the Governor's Citizens' Committee on Education, Tallahassee, Florida, 1973, p. 171.

14. See: Improving Education in Florida: A Reassessment, a report prepared for the Select Joint Committee on Public Schools, Florida legislature, 1978, p. 23.

15. See: Terrence E. Deal, et al., "The Early Childhood Education Program: An Assessment of Its Impact and Implementation," Standford University, School of Education, Standford Center for Research and Development in Teaching, May, 1977.

16. This section draws heavily from a section prepared by the author in Improving Education in Florida: A Reassessment, pp. 47-56.

17. James S. Coleman, "Introduction: Choice of American Education," Parents, Teachers, and Children (San Francisco, Calif.: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1977), p. 4.

18. One of the best summaries of this finding is contained in Jonathan P. Sher's, Economy, Efficiency, and Equality: The Myth of Rural School and District Consolidation (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, 1976).

19. This point is made in James W. Guthrie's, "Organizational Scale and School Success," a paper prepared for the National Institute of Education's Berkeley-Stanford Seminar on School Finance and Organization, August, 1977.

20. See: Karl E. Weick, "Educational Organizations As Loosely Coupled Systems," Administrative Science Quarterly, 21 (March, 1976), 1-19.

21. Robert A. Dahl, "The City in the Future of Democracy," American Political Science Review, 61 (December, 1967), 953-70.

22. Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (New York: Basic Books, 1972).

23. Martin Carnoy and Henry M. Levin, The Limits of Educational Reform (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1976).

24. Walter I. Garms, James W. Guthrie, Lawrence C. Pierce, School Finance: The Economics and Politics of Public Education (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1978).

25. The intellectual conflict between hierarchical organizations and fragmented organizations is explored in Vincent Ostrom, The Intellectual Crisis in American Public Administration (University, AL.: The University of Alabama Press, 1973.

26. See: John E. Coons, "Law and the Sovereigns of Childhood," Phi Delta Kappan, 58 (September, 1976), 19-24.

27. See: The National Urban Coalition, Four Case Studies of School Site Lump Sum Budgeting, and Select Joint Committee on Public Schools of the Florida legislature, Improving Education in Florida: A Reassessment, 1978.

28. The National Urban Coalition, Four Case Studies, pp. 3-7.

29. The results of the survey are reported in "Site Management," a paper prepared for the California State Board of Education, July, 1977, by the Educational, Management and Evaluation Commission, p. 31.

30. Figures 1 and 2 are adapted from similar figures in "Site Management," pp. 6-8.

31. For example, see Thomas Sowell, "Patterns of Black Excellence," The Public Interest, 43 (Spring, 1976), 26-58.

32. See: National Urban Coalition, Four Case Studies, for examples in two Florida and two California districts.

33. The next two paragraphs are adapted from a previous article by the author entitled School Site Management (Palo Alto, Calif.: Aspen Institute, 1971), p. 12.

34. Stephen D. Sugarman, "Educational Reform at the Margin: Two Ideas," Phi Delta Kappan (November, 1977), 155.

35. The California State Department of Education has published a booklet entitled Establishing School Site Councils which discusses the composition of a school site council, selection and replacement of members, relationship of the council to existing committees and some of the basic issues that are likely to come before a new school site council.

36. California Education Code Section 52012 quoted in California State Department of Education, "Establishing School Site Councils--California School Improvement Program," Sacramento: 1977, p. 3.

37. Ibid., pp. 3-6.

38. Ibid., p. 4.

39. Garms, Guthrie and Pierce, School Finance, pp. 241-47.

40. See: Niccolo Machiavelli, "The Prince," in Machiavelli: The Chief Works and Others, Vol. 1, translated by Allan Gilbert (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1965), p. 26.

41. Robert A. Dahl, Democracy in the United States: Promise and Performance 2nd ed. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1972), p. 397.